

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 ADP-00 AF-10 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7126

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS/ PFOR, PN, UNSC

SUBJECT: EDITORIAL COMMENT ON SCALI TESTIMONY

REF: PANAMA 1874; PANAMA 1914

SUMMARY: EDITORIAL REACTION TO SCALI TESTIMONY WAS TO
SLING MUD AT HIM AND THE US AT LARGE. END SUMMARY.

1. GOVERNMENT RADIO LIBERTAD SET THE THEME
AND THE TEXT OF PANAMANIAN EDITORIAL COMMENT ON SCALI
TESTIMONY. APRIL 4 AFTERNOON RADIO EDITORIAL SAYS
AMBASSADOR SCALI AND OTHERS HAVE UNLEASHED A
SYSTEMATIC DEFAMATION CAMPAIGN TO DEPRIVE OF ANY VIRTUE THE
RESULTS AND PURPOSES OF THE SC MEETING.

2. THE GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA DAILY, MATUTINO,
CARRIES THE SAME EDITORIAL BEGINNING ON PAGE ONE OF
ITS APRIL 5 EDITION. (SEE 1914)

3. MARIO AUGUSTO, ONE OF THE MOST PRESITGEOUS PANAMANIAN
COLUMNISTS, USUALLY CONSIDERED RELATIVELY MODERATE, ALSO LAUNCHED
A VICIOUS ATTACK ON AMBASSADOR SCALI IN EL PANAMA
AMERICAN APRIL 4. ENTITLED " SCALI' S CONFESSION"
THE COLUMN DESCRIBES THE AMBASSADOR AS CONTRITE AND
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ON HIS KNEES BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES
RECOGNIZING HIS ERRORS, HIS WEAKNESSES, HIS SINS
OF COMMISSION AND OMISSION AND BEATING HIS BREAST.
NOTING A DELUGE OF QUESTIONS, PARTICULARLY ON LACK OF
SUPPORT FOR THE US POSITION, AUGUSTO ARGUES THAT THE
AMBASSADOR'S REPLY THAT THE MAJORITY ALIGNS ITSELF
WITH THE WEAKER SIDE WAS A CONFESSION THAT THE UNITED
STATES FIRED THE WEAPON OF THE VETO NOT AGAINST
PANAMA BUT AGAINST THE UNANIMOUS CENSURE OF THE WORLD.
AUGUSTO SAID THE AMBASSADOR BECAME RIDICULOUS WHEN
HE TRIED TO EXCUSE HIS FAILURE SAYING THAT HE WAS
FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, WHILE
HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID IN PANAMA THAT HE WAS RECEIVING
INSTRUCTIONS DIRECTLY FROM PRESIDENT NIXON. THE COLUMNIST
SAYS THAT HE WHO SAW FANTASIES OF BEING THREATENED WITH
VIOLENCE IF HE APPLIED THE VETO NOW SEES FANTASIES OF
PANAMA'S BEING PRESSURED INTO MAINTAINING A POSITION THAT
IT HAD PUBLICLY ADOPTED AND MAINTAINED FOR MANY YEARS.

3. CRITICA, APRIL 5, DOES NOT REFER DIRECTLY TO THE
SCALI TESTIMONY BUT ITS EDITORIAL ENTITLED THE
"TACTICS OF DEFAMATION" ALLEGES A CAMPAIGN BY THE UNITED
STATES MEDIA AGAINST PANAMA. IT CITES CONGRESSMAN
MURPHY'S ALLEGATIONS REGARDING GOP INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG
TRAFFIC BUT IS FOCUSED PARTICULARLY ON TIME MAGAZINE'S
REPORT THAT A GROUP OF HOMOSEXUALS WERE PLANNING TO
MAKE A PARADISE OUT OF ONE OF THE SAN BLAS ISLANDS.
REJECTING THE ARRIVAL OF THESE VISITORS, THE EDITORIAL
STATES THAT FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF MORBID
PSYCHOPATHS THE UNITED STATES HAS ITS OWN PARADISE WHERE
EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE EVEN WHEN IT GOES AGAINST
THE MOST ELEMENTAL NORMS OF DECORUM.

4. APRIL 6 MEDIA DROPS SUBJECT TO CONCENTRATE ON OAS
MEETING.

5. COMMENT: THE HOSTILE PANAMANIAN PRESS, PARTICULARLY
ON THE CANAL ISSUE, IS NOTHING NEW. WE HAD ANTICIPATED
A STEP-UP OF MEDIA PRESSURE FOLLOWING THE UNSC. THE
TONE OF THESE MOST RECENT MANIFESTATION INDICATES THE
CAMPAIGN MAY BE A PARTICULARLY DIRTY ONE.
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